

ABSTRACT

A method and system are disclosed for modifying a layer of high-k material using a plasma process. The plasma process leads to enhanced removal rates of the modified high-k dielectric material using wet etching. The plasma process modifies the layer of high-k material through exposure to the plasma, where the plasma can comprise inert gases and/or reactive gases. The plasma treatment can be implemented as a step performed at the end of a gate-electrode etch process, or as a step at the end of a spacer-etch process.